

And I appreciate the team. I appreciate a team that's figured out how to, kind of, meld stars together for the common good. You know, there are a lot of teams with stars on them. I'm sure you've run into a few of them with some pretty good stars. But a lot of times, teams aren't able to work together, and this team was able to do so. They were tough on defense. They had an attitude—a positive attitude all the way throughout the season. In other words, they didn't think they could get beat. As a matter of fact, they only lost two games on their home court. It's a pretty good—it's called the home court advantage—[*laughter*]¹⁵ and 2 in Arco Arena.

I know the city of Sacramento is really proud of you, and I know that if the mayor were here and the citizens that are, kind of, serving the folks of Sacramento were here, they'd be saying, "We really like the Monarchs; we're really proud that you brought a championship team to our city."

So one of the things I'd like to say to you is, thanks for being team players; thanks for setting high goals; and thanks for working together to achieve those goals.

I also appreciate the fact that you've got players from China and Portugal and Mali, as well as a lot of different States here in the United States. I think it's pretty neat, isn't it, for people who—from different backgrounds, different cultures are able to figure out a way to win. I think it's a great example for the world; I really do. I think it's important for people to come together for a common cause. I know you view yourself only as athletes, but I view you as diplomats as well.

I also want to thank you for the example you've set. It's one thing to be called champs on the court; it's another thing to be called champs in life. One of the things you've done is, you've set a great example for young women athletes. As the father of twin daughters who had trouble finding the backboard, I might add—[*laughter*]¹⁶—sorry, girls—I love the fact that there are role models, though, for young women, that somebody can look up to and say, "Gosh, I want to be like her; I want to realize my dreams by being like Yolanda."

So it's great to be able to play basketball as well as you play, but it's also really important to know that you're setting a good example for people watching your every move.

I was impressed by the fact that you're working on Read to Achieve. You know, I oftentimes call on fellow citizens to serve our country by helping somebody else. One way you can really help somebody is to teach somebody to read. What a wonderful gift. And the fact that pro athletes were willing to take time out of your busy schedule to help inspire a young reader means a lot to the country.

I appreciate very much your honoring breast cancer survivors, helping to lift somebody's spirits. Thanks for entering the annual Race for the Cure. I used to be able to run. [*Laughter*] But thanks for running while you're young. I know you didn't have to do it, but you set a good sign for people. All in all, I'm honored to be up here with some champs. It's a delight to welcome you here to the White House.

May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our country. Welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. in the East Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John Whisenant, head coach, Sacramento Monarchs, and his wife, Joyce; John Thomas, president, Sacramento Monarchs; and Mayor Heather Frago of Sacramento, CA.

Proclamation 8019—Prayer for Peace, Memorial Day, 2006

May 16, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout our history, the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States have placed the security of our Nation before their own safety. America will be forever grateful for their service and sacrifice. On Memorial Day, we honor those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

Defending the ideals of our Nation has required the service and sacrifice of those from

every generation. From Valley Forge, across Europe and Asia, and in Afghanistan and Iraq, courageous Americans have given their lives so that others could live in freedom. These Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen took an oath to defend America, and they upheld that oath with bravery and decency. They have liberated the oppressed, spread freedom and peace, and set a standard of courage and compassion for our Nation. All who enjoy the blessings of liberty live in their debt.

This debt of gratitude extends also to the families who stood by our servicemen and women in times of war and times of peace. Each of the fallen has left behind loved ones who carry a burden of grief, and all Americans are inspired by the strength of these families.

At this important time in the history of freedom, a new generation of Americans is defending our flag and our liberty. These men and women carry on the legacy of our Nation's fallen heroes and demonstrate that the United States Armed Forces remain the greatest force for freedom in human history.

Those who lost their lives in the defense of freedom helped protect our citizens and lay the foundation of peace for people everywhere. On Memorial Day, a grateful Nation pays tribute to their personal courage, love of country, and dedication to duty.

In respect for their devotion to America, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved on May 11, 1950, as amended (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106-579, has also designated the minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 29, 2006, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11 a.m. of that day as a time to unite in prayer. I also ask all Americans to

observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3 p.m., local time, on Memorial Day. I encourage the media to participate in these observances. I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff until noon on this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States, and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:52 a.m., May 17, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 18.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring Prime Minister John Howard of Australia

May 16, 2006

Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Howard, distinguished guests: Welcome to the White House. This is going to be a joyous occasion because we're honoring two really good friends. We wish you a warm welcome. We thank the Howards for making a long journey, and thanks for spending so much time with us here in the States.

Our partnership is broad, and it's deep. Australia and America are working together to expand trade and to counter threats of nuclear proliferation, to make the latest energy technologies available to all nations. In the global war on terror, we have no better ally than Australia and John Howard. And in the spread of freedom to create lasting peace, we have no better friend than Australia and John Howard.

Mr. Prime Minister, we value your courage and your faithfulness and your strength, and